

II. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

A. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Planning efforts for a library for the Cordelia area can be described as multi-faceted, highly coordinated, and community based. Several studies and needs assessments were conducted by different agencies, whose findings formed the basis of this needs assessment. These research efforts include:

- Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan (2001)
- Solano County Library Strategic Planning Process (2000)
- Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendations Report (2001)
- Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team Planning Efforts (2001-2002)

Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan

The first planning project began in the year 2000 when the Solano County Library initiated a facilities master planning process. Group 4/Architecture and Kathryn Page Associates assisted the County Library staff in a twelve-month planning effort that involved community leaders and citizen representatives from each of the county's five communities. Site visits, physical assessments of existing facilities, focus groups, community surveys and other methods were used to assess current services and projected needs. Service level recommendations were developed using recognized library planning guidelines that were applied to Solano County community needs.

The need for a library facility to serve the Cordelia area emerged as one of the master plan's highest priorities. In Fall 2001, the Fairfield City Council adopted the Facilities Master Plan as it applied to Fairfield and confirmed the need for a new library to serve Cordelia as the first priority for development.

Solano County Library Strategic Planning Process

Solano County Library initiated another key planning effort concurrent with the Facilities Master Plan project. The Library embarked on its strategic planning effort, to formulate an updated strategic plan to guide policy formation and service delivery implementation. This effort was community-based, with representation from all five Solano County cities served by the County Library. The Strategic Planning Committee formulated service priorities that formed the basis for the proposed library's Plan of Service.

Cordelia Area Task Force

At the same time that the Library's Facilities Master Plan was underway, the Cordelia-Area Task Force, at the behest of the Fairfield City Council, conducted a study concerning the Cordelia area. The Task Force's Recommendations Report, published in May 2001, contains significant contextual information regarding the service area for the proposed library as well as in-depth coverage of community issues and needs. The Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendation Report, which was presented to the Fairfield City Council, echoes the Facilities Master Plan proposal to open a library in Cordelia.



Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team Planning Efforts

The City of Fairfield assembled a planning team in late 2001 to identify and secure an appropriate site for the new library and to prepare the Bond application. The County Library hired Kathryn Page to conduct a community needs assessment for the project.



*Library Design Charrette #1
March 2002*

For the needs assessment, focus groups in addition to those held during the Facilities Master planning process, were conducted with teens, parents and educators. A community survey was distributed to 1,200 Cordelia area households. The City worked with the County's Economic Development Corporation (SEDCORP) and the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District to gather accurate demographic data for the service area, including both City and County segments.

Joint Use Cooperative Agreement between Library, Schools and City

Fairfield City staff, County Library staff and representatives of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District met over several months to discuss the needs of students and teachers of the School District and to develop a plan of service to meet those needs. They used input from the needs assessment, as well as interviews with key informants such as the high school's librarian and Fairfield Library staff. Plans were developed for collaborative services that address two significant student needs: a Computer/Study Skills Center and a Career Center, described below.

Computer/Study Skills Center

The Computer/Study Skill Center addresses one of the strongest findings of the needs assessment, namely the demand for more computer access for students and a place for homework, tutoring and study skills development. Comments from parents and students noted during the focus groups, surveys and community meetings underscored the need for the Computer/Study Skills Center program. The center will support the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District's strategic goal to have schools in the district meet its Academic Performance Index (API), including targets for all student groups.

Career Center

The Career Center addresses the need to supplement the limited career center capabilities of the school district and will offer students access to career development material and programs beyond the area schools hours of operation. The center addresses two of the strategic goals of the School District: 1) by 2005, to have fifty percent of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified seniors complete the course sequence necessary for admission to UC/CSU, and 2) by 2007, to have sixty percent of Fairfield-Suisun Unified high school students enrolled in or have completed three classes in a designated certificate program.

The Fairfield City Council approved the joint use cooperative agreement on May 21, 2002 the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Board approved the agreement on May 23, 2002 and the Solano County Board of Supervisors approved the agreement on May 28, 2002.



B. PLANNING EFFORT FOR THE SERVICE AREA

The City of Fairfield and the Solano County Library engaged in several significant planning efforts that involved diverse community input, demographic data collection, and coalition building. These planning efforts provided the high quality information needed for all parties involved to make strategic decisions on the type of facility and services that will answer the specific needs of this community.

The four efforts were community-based, with high levels of community input and leadership. They were multi-faceted approaches, employing several data collection tools. The planning work that assisted the team in determining the need for the library, and planning for service and the building are:

- Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan (2001)
- Solano County Library Strategic Planning Process for FY 2001/02 – 2003/04 (2000)
- Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendations Report (2001)
- Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team Planning Efforts (2001-2002)

1. Facilities Master Plan 2001

The Solano County Library initiated the planning effort for a new library to serve the Cordelia community early in the year 2000. On February 22, 2000, the Library engaged the services of Group 4/Architecture, Research and Planning, Inc. to prepare a county-wide library facilities master plan. A **project working committee** was formed, including Group 4/Architecture personnel, County Library staff, the County Architect and Kathryn Page, a library building consultant.

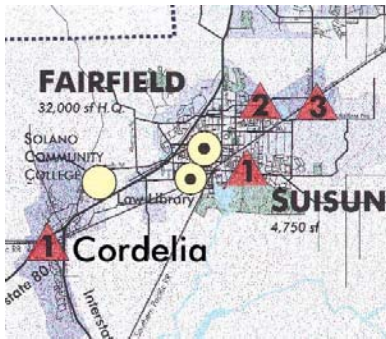
The master planning process included a visioning workshop, stakeholder meetings, focus groups, community surveys, a library usage mapping project, demographic analysis and projections, on-site observations at each existing library and review of the physical condition of each existing library. Service level recommendations were developed using recognized library planning guidelines that were applied to Solano County community needs. See *Appendix A*.

Community participation was key in the development of the Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan. Approximately 250 Fairfield-Suisun Community Library customers participated in customer satisfaction surveys. Seven focus group meetings, involving 123 people, were conducted to specifically discuss library services in Fairfield and the Cordelia area. In addition to the focus groups, the project working committee met with 14 community leaders from Fairfield at three separate City



*Inspiring Joan Frye Williams at
Visioning Workshop 2000*

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Visioning Workshop 2000

Stakeholder Committee meetings to formulate strategies for improving library services in Fairfield. See *Appendix B*.

The findings from the needs assessment conducted for the Master Plan led the project working committee to conclude that building a new library in the Cordelia area of Fairfield was a priority. This need arose from the following conditions:

- The Cordelia area is a relatively new and rapidly growing part of town.
- The Cordelia area is geographically separated from the rest of the City by a stretch of rural land.
- I-80 is the major connector between Fairfield and the Cordelia area. The traffic created by the I-80/I-680 interchange creates a major barrier for Cordelia residents and furthers the geographical separation between this part of the city and the town proper.

a. Visioning Workshop

In June 2000, a **Visioning Workshop** was held at the Fairfield Library to kick off the master planning project. Key leaders representing the County and each of the communities attended the all-day session. The workshop participants honed in on three major areas for planning. These areas became central themes that carried through the entire master planning project.

▪ The Library and Community

- The Library should be interactive with and responsive to the community it serves.
- The Library should provide meaningful services to disenfranchised and/or under-served populations.
- The Library should engage in strategic partnerships to increase its effectiveness in the community.

▪ The Library and Technology

- The Library should be the place to go for information technology training.
- The Library should maximize customer opportunities for self-services.
- The Library should provide services seven days per week, 24 hours per day.

▪ The Library and Partnerships

- The Library should apply innovative technologies that add value, personalization and interactivity.
- The Library should develop partnerships in order to provide better service and programs to the community.

- The Library should develop partnerships that provide joint-use opportunities (i.e., one-stop shopping: post office, parks and recreation, and city hall services).

b. Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder committees were formed to represent each of the cities served by the County Library. The project working committee collaborated with each stakeholder group to develop service level recommendations, expansion priorities and implementation strategies for each proposed project. The Fairfield stakeholders group identified as its first priority a library to serve the Cordelia area.

Cordelia area stakeholders were included in the Fairfield stakeholders group. The stakeholders held three meetings. Stakeholders included representatives from the Fairfield-Suisun and Travis Unified School Districts, Fairfield Planning Commission, City of Fairfield, Solano County Library, community at large, and the Mayor of Fairfield.

The stakeholders concluded the following:

- The Cordelia area is geographically remote from the rest of the City of Fairfield, thus presenting an accessibility problem to Fairfield's only library, located in downtown Fairfield.
- The Cordelia area is sorely lacking in many community services.
- A full-service branch library that is accessible to school-aged children and residents within the area, and that can serve as a social center for the community, is vitally needed.

c. Library Usage Mapping Project

As a part of the Facilities Master Plan, the County Library undertook a library usage mapping project to identify the library of choice for county residents. Using a two-week sampling of circulation records, library staff mapped where users lived and what library they used. This clearly identified the use patterns of Cordelia residents. This study showed that Cordelia area residents frequently used libraries in cities other than Fairfield. According to the information gathered from the focus groups and surveys, Cordelia area residents find the traffic conditions too onerous to attempt the eight to ten mile drive to town.

d. Local Agency Review and Approvals

The Facilities Master Plan was completed and was approved by the **Solano County Board of Supervisors** on March 6, 2001. In October 2001, the **Fairfield City Council** approved the locations for Fairfield branch libraries that were identified in the Facilities Master Plan, endorsed the Cordelia area



Stakeholder Committee



Library usage mapping



All-staff Presentation 2000

library branch as the first priority, and authorized the City Manager to prepare an application for State of California Library Construction Bond Program funds to design and construct a new library for the Cordelia area. See *Appendix C*.

2. Solano County Library Strategic Planning Process 2000

The County Library initiated another key planning effort concurrently with the Facilities Master Plan project. In the fall of 2000, the Library embarked on this effort to formulate an updated strategic plan to guide policy formation and service delivery implementation through fiscal year 2003/04. This effort was community-based, with representation from all five Solano County cities served by Solano County Library. The ethnically-diverse 24-member project committee, whose participants included a Fairfield City Council member, high school students, community activists, representatives from the business community, parents, and seniors, created the plan.

This effort laid the foundation for the Library's "new way of doing business" and articulated the specific goals and objectives of each existing facility and service. It forms the basis for the **Plan of Service** for all Solano County Library outlets, including the proposed library in Cordelia.

The Community Vision section of the Strategic Plan incorporated the following components:

- Multi-lingual residents will have resources available to meet their recreational and educational needs.
- Students' academic performance will improve.
- All residents will have the opportunity for lifelong learning.
- Workers will have the opportunity to participate in traditional and non-traditional continuing education programs.
- Businesses will be able to select employees from a pool of educated and people-oriented workers.
- Residents will have information about the community through a good newspaper, local cable access channels, and the Internet.
- Community organizations and institutions will form stronger partnerships.
- All residents will have access to countywide services locally.

Through this process, the committee conducted a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis, and labeled the following weaknesses: low test scores for school children, lack of teacher training, transportation issues, commuter population, no meeting space. In this analysis, the committee saw opportunities to expand and coordinate cultural arts, create an intergenerational center, build a safe place for teens, engage in better urban



planning, and provide more coordination county-wide. Threats included sprawl and density issues, gridlock, and infrastructure failure. Summaries of the committee's meetings are found in *Appendix D1 & D2*.

Using the Public Library Association's, *The New Planning for Results* by Sandra Nelson as a guideline, the Strategic Planning Committee selected the following roles as their priorities:

- General Information
- Current Topics and Titles
- Information Literacy
- Basic Literacy
- Lifelong Learning
- Commons

These priorities form the basis for our Plan of Service.

3. Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendations 2001

The Cordelia Area Task Force was composed of Cordelia area leaders whose goal was to bring to light and ameliorate all issues of concern to Cordelia residents. In May 2001, the Task Force created a recommendations report to detail their needs and propose solutions. The Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendation Report, which was presented to the Fairfield City Council in June and August 2001, echoes the Facilities Master Plan proposal to open a library in the Cordelia area.

4. Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team Planning

City of Fairfield management staff assembled a team to pursue funding for a library in the Cordelia service area. The team members consisted of City of Fairfield and County Library staff, as listed below:

- Nancy Huston, Assistant City Manager, Fairfield City Manager's Office
- Isaac (Ike) Anderson, Assistant to the City Manager, Fairfield City Manager's Office
- Curt Johnston, Assistant Director, Department of Planning and Development
- Joe Lucchio, Economic Development Project Manager, Department of Planning and Development
- Cynthia Garcia, Management Analyst, Department of Planning and Development
- Rick Hancock, Assistant Planner, Department of Planning and Development



- Ann Cousineau, County Library Director
- Bonnie Katz, Assistant County Library Director
- Cara Swartz, Branch Manager, Fairfield-Suisun Library
- Dee Alarcon, Solano County Office of Education

The team began their work by collecting information and studies already completed regarding the needs in the Cordelia service area. At the same time, Kathryn Page Associates began to prepare a library needs assessment specifically for the Cordelia area community.

The team presented their findings and had a discussion about the needs of the Cordelia residents with the Fairfield City Council at two different study sessions.

a. Fairfield City Council Study Sessions and Meetings

The Fairfield City Council held two study sessions to discuss the City's submittal for Proposition 14 Library Bond Act grant funds.

The Fairfield City Council was introduced to the Fairfield Cordelia Library project at a study session led by the Library Project Management Team on October 9, 2001. At this study session, the Team led a discussion about the Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan, Proposition 14 Library Bond Act grant process, and the proposed multi-purpose library facility in north Cordelia.

The Council was familiar with the needs raised by Cordelia residents through the Cordelia Area Task Force recommendations report. The need of Cordelia area residents for a library, as detailed in the County Library Master Plan, were discussed.

The outcome of this study session was the Council giving the Library Project Management Team the direction to bring forward a resolution in support of the branch library location priorities identified in the Master Plan. The Council affirmed support of the Proposition 14 grant submittal process that required hiring an architect and other consultants to complete the grant application. The Council considered a report on a multi-purpose facility concept that included the community library and a partnership with Solano County Office of Education and the City.

At the October 16, 2001 council meeting, the City Council adopted the recommendations of the Solano County Library Facilities Master Plan that relate to Fairfield library service and stated its support of the priorities for facility development in that Plan, including the creation of a new library in the Cordelia area as the first priority

The purpose of the second Study Session, held May 14, 2002, was to inform the City Council on the progress the team had made on the Library Project, and to receive public comments.

b. Meetings with the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District

Members of the Library Project Management Team met over several months with representatives of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District to discuss the needs of students and staff of the School District and to develop a cooperative agreement to meet those needs. The needs the School District saw in the Cordelia service area were:

- A **Career Center** to address the need of high school students for information on colleges and careers. Currently, the high schools in the District have limited access during school hours to on-site career or college centers where materials and staff are available to assist students. They have no access after school or on weekends.
- A **Computer/Study Skills Center** to address the need to access technology to conduct research, complete assignments, and gain skills. This need was conveyed to the Project Management Team by the School District, and was echoed in the focus groups and surveys of parents and students.

"Students would actually learn how to use a library for research reports, a quiet study place and, of course, be able to expand everyone's reading choices."

- Winter 2001-2002
Community Survey

The Project Management Team and the School District developed a joint use agreement that will provide a computer/study skills center and a career center for the students of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District.

c. Solano Economic Development Corporation Demographic Support

The Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team worked closely with the staff of the Solano Economic Development Corporation (SEDCORP) to gather accurate demographic data for the service area, including both City and County segments. SEDCORP utilizes the Claritas market research firm to gather data.

C. COMMUNITY DETERMINES SERVICE AREA NEEDS

1. Focus Groups and Interviews

Twenty community focus groups were held throughout Solano County during the Facilities Master Plan project, including one well-attended session in June 2000, with involved residents of the Cordelia Service Area. The Solano County Library held a second focus group meeting in December 2001. The second session targeted students and teens that reside in the service area. Additionally, a one-on-one parent interview was conducted with a Cordelia area parent who was considered to be representative of parents in the service area with school age children.

a. Involved Residents Focus Group – June 2000

On June 7, 2000, the Solano County Library conducted a focus group meeting with involved residents from the Cordelia service area. The meeting was open to the entire Cordelia community. Approximately 25 adults attended as well as several children. The attendees represented a broad spectrum of the service population, including parents of school-age children, working adults, retired seniors and teens, and therefore could be considered a general community meeting as well as a focus group. The input received is included as *Appendix F*.

Participants expressed an often-repeated concern about the lack of a library in their community and the fact that traffic congestion and geographical separation from central Fairfield makes it difficult to access library services after work and most times in the afternoon and evening hours. This is especially true for service area commuters and their families. During the focus group discussions Cordelia residents identified the need for the library to provide:

- Services for the increasing number of school age children in the community,
- More computer labs,
- Larger student study spaces,
- Small group study rooms with computer access, and
- Plug-in capability for laptop computers.

"Need local branch for kids."

*- Winter 2001 Cordelia
Focus Group*

Focus group participants also expressed a strong desire for:

- A learning center for people of all ages,
- Meeting rooms that could be used for Adult or ESL (English as a Second Language) users, and
- A community-gathering place in the center of other facilities and activities in the service area that is accessible to all Cordelia residents.

All of the needs expressed during this focus group session are addressed in the Plan of Service and translated into the Building Program for the Fairfield Cordelia Library.

b. Students and Teens Focus Group – December 2001

A second Cordelia Service Area focus group meeting was held in December 2001, with 20 students and teens from the service area. See *Appendix E*. The session was conducted at the Rodriguez High School library. Rodriguez, which opened in September 2001, is the new high school located in the service area. Students who participated during the discussions spoke repeatedly about the need for:

- Homework assistance,
- Study rooms and greater access to computers,
- Newer collections,
- Improvement in the quality and selection of Young Adult book collections,
- Good public transportation access, and
- Volunteering at the library if it was closer to their home.

All of the issues and needs articulated by the Cordelia Service Area students and teens are incorporated in the Plan of Service and Building Program. Perhaps, one unexpected yet valuable benefit of having a library in the service area and in close proximity to the high school is the availability of a student volunteer base to assist with library services and programs and provide input on how the library can best respond to the needs of this user population group.

"This area needs more places for young people especially to go and spend time. A new contemporary library would be a big benefit."

c. One-on-one Parent Interview – December 2001

On December 5, 2001, the Solano County Library consultant conducted an interview with a representative parent of school age children who resides in the Cordelia Service Area. The parent touched on many of the same needs that were expressed during the two focus group sessions, including the prohibitive distance of the central Fairfield library for Cordelia residents, and the need to have a library in close proximity to home and school. The parent also identified a need that has continually surfaced in all community needs assessment forums, that being the need to establish a sense of community and civic presence in the Cordelia area.

The needs identified during this interview are addressed in the Plan of Service and Building Program.

- Winter 2001
Community Survey

"A library close to our house would be wonderful and utilized several times a month by all family members."

2. Survey of the Service Area Residents

The community was surveyed during both the Facilities Master Plan and the needs assessment processes. Without an existing library facility, conducting a survey of Cordelia/Green Valley residents was challenging. Several methods were used to address the challenge. First, many Cordelia residents use not only the Fairfield Library but also other libraries in the county. Whenever possible, survey respondents' place of residence was identified to allow correlation between comments and place of origin. Frequently, Cordelia residents would identify themselves in focus group meetings and their comments could therefore be tracked. In addition, the County Library undertook a library usage-mapping

- Winter 2001
Community Survey



project as part of the Facilities Master Plan to identify the library of choice for county residents. This clearly identified the use patterns of Cordelia residents.

a. Surveys Mailed to Service Area Residents

In December 2001 - February 2002, a community survey was mailed to 1,200 Cordelia residents whose names and addresses had been compiled already in a mailing list by the City of Fairfield. 330 completed responses were received and tabulated. See *Appendix G*.

"This area could definitely use a library. I use the Benicia Library because it is easier to get to and the traffic from Cordelia into town [Fairfield] is horrendous so much of the time."

- Winter 2001
Community Survey

- In general, comments from survey respondents indicated a clear and consistent need for a library in proximity of the Cordelia Service Area. The message that was again repeated in the survey responses (which has been a persistent declaration of the community) is the fact that distance and traffic gridlock isolates Cordelia Service Area residents and has made it very difficult for them to access the Fairfield library.
- Many service area residents indicated that they choose to use library branches in other cities because of the difficulty in getting to the Fairfield library.
- Though the majority of residents access the library by car, many of the survey respondents indicated a need or a willingness to use public transportation to access the library.
- The survey indicated that a significant number of service area residents would use the library to support the educational needs of their school age children, and for a large pool of respondents the library is needed to provide a place to study and to work on school assignments.
- Other than English language speakers, the survey confirmed that there is a mix of other languages being spoken in the service area, the most predominant being Spanish. The need for English as a Second Language (ESL) and basic literacy programs and accommodations is validated by the survey data.

3. Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendations

At the same time that the Library's Facilities Master Plan was underway, the Cordelia-Area Task Force, at the behest of the Fairfield City Council, conducted an important study concerning the Cordelia area. The Task Force's Recommendations Report was published in May 2001. It contains significant contextual information regarding the service area for the proposed library as well as in-depth coverage of community issues and needs. As part of the current study, the consultant used the report's findings to follow up with City staff on service issues and needs for Cordelia.

Key issues/needs identified by service area residents in the Cordelia Area Task Force Recommendations Report that relate to the Fairfield Cordelia Library are:

- The need for a library and community center; and the need to control increasing traffic, growth, and quality of life impacts.
- The need to address traffic congestion, specifically the I-80/I-680 interchange; and the need to develop infrastructure for growth.
- The need to address the issue of overcrowding of K-12 schools in the service area; and the need for a new middle school and the reopening of an elementary school.

4. Library Management and Staff Comments

Fairfield Library staff and County Library management staff were interviewed to elicit their perspectives on service to the Cordelia service population. While the Library staff stated that they do not always know the place of residence of the customers that they are assisting, there are often clues, especially when the interaction is with parents at programming events or school children who attend a particular school. Staff also remarked that Cordelia residents often self-identify or it becomes clear that they are from the Cordelia area when they discuss timing of their library visits or the difficulty of getting to the library. The recent survey's comments are also remarkable in showing this trend.

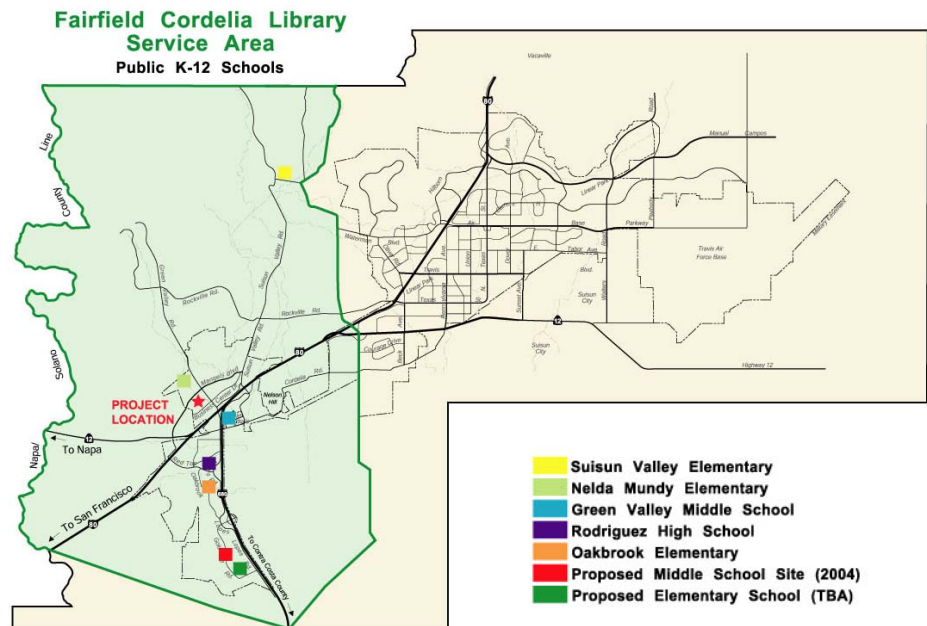
5. School District's Collaborative Planning for the Service Area

The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District has been an active partner in the Cordelia Library project from its inception. District representatives have advocated for increased library presence in the Cordelia area since the beginning of the Facilities Master Plan project and District personnel served on Fairfield's Facilities Master Plan stakeholder committee.

The new library will serve K-12 students at five existing schools and one future school, all administered by the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. The schools are:

- Nelda Mundy Elementary School
- Oakbrook Elementary School
- Suisun Valley Elementary School
- Green Valley Middle School
- Rodriguez High School
- Southbrook Area Elementary School (will open in 2006)

The needs assessment, as it relates to the requirements of K-12 students, has



significantly benefited from community input, including meetings with parents of school age children, interviews with the school librarian at Rodriguez High School, and the involvement of school district personnel at every step of the planning process. The schools' library service needs, which are outlined in detail in Section IV of this report, are in response to the requirements and desires identified during the needs assessment forums conducted, beginning in 2000.

a. Development of a Joint Use Project

Shortly after the Fairfield Cordelia Library Project Management Team's first meeting, a Joint Use Subcommittee, involving staff from the School District, the City and the County Library, was formed to explore ways to turn the needs of K-12 students in the Cordelia area into a specific service program that could emanate from the new library.

The Joint Use Subcommittee consisted of the following members:

- Sharon Tucker, Superintendent, Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District
- Nancy Huston, Assistant City Manager, City of Fairfield
- Ann Cousineau, Solano County Library Director
- Bill Luna, Director of Administrative Services, Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District
- Bruce Chmielecki, Director of Information Technology, Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District
- Rob Pierce, Director of Facilities and Construction, Fairfield-Suisun Unified

School District

- Bonnie Katz, Assistant Solano County Library Director
- Cara Swartz, Branch Manager, Fairfield-Suisun Library

After a kickoff meeting in early December 2001, the group continued discussions through December and January 2002 until, at a meeting in mid-January, the outline of a collaborative service program emerged. The proposed project focused on the needs of high school students and had two major areas of emphasis - a Computer/Study Skills Center and a Career Center.

Computer/Study Skills Center

Under the provisions of the Joint Use Agreement, the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District will hold three information literacy study skills classes per year at the Library, using the facility's Computer/Study Skills Center and meeting room to conduct the classes. Each class will include 13.5 hours of class time. The classes will be targeted toward middle school and high school, taught by credentialed teachers from the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District. The District will also provide age-appropriate educational software for use by the classes that will be installed on all twenty computers in the Computer/Study Skills Center. The Library will provide the computers, as well as technical maintenance of the equipment and staff to manage student use of the equipment and software. The Study Skills classes will be scheduled to ensure that the Computer/Study Skills Center will be closed to the public no more than five hours per week while classes are in session.

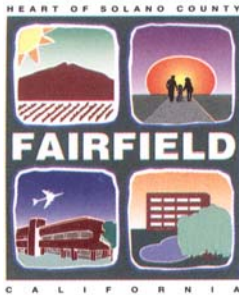
The Computer/Study Skills Center addresses one of the strongest findings of the needs assessment, namely the demand for more computer access for students and a place for homework, tutoring and study skills development. Comments from parents and students noted during the focus groups, surveys and community meetings underscored the need for the Computer/Study Skills Center program. The center will support the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District's strategic goal to have schools in the district meet its Academic Performance Index (API), including targets for all student groups.

Career Center

The Library will create a dedicated space to help middle and high school students and their families make informed decisions regarding career choices and college selection. The Center will be a focal point for students to learn about careers, employment opportunities and education choices. It will provide a link to the District's growing certification program, an off-campus switching center to connect students with jobs and internships. It includes seating, computers, an online directory of internships and job postings and print collections. Both the District and the County Library will provide software and materials for the



ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY



Center. The School District will also provide guidance software that will be installed on the Library's computers and will provide counselors to conduct two student/parent outreach meetings in the Fall of each year, held at the Library in the meeting room. The Library will conduct follow-up meetings aimed at the same target audience to provide financial aid planning information to college-bound students and their families.

The Career Center addresses the need to supplement the limited career center capabilities of the school district and will offer students access to career development materials and programs beyond the area schools' hours of operation. The center addresses two of the strategic goals of the School District: 1) by 2005, to have fifty percent of the Fairfield-Suisun Unified seniors complete the course sequence necessary for admission to UC/CSU, and 2) by 2007, to have sixty percent of Fairfield-Suisun Unified high school students enrolled in or have completed three classes in a designated certificate program.

The County Library, the City of Fairfield and the Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District have developed a cooperative agreement to ensure that the Fairfield Cordelia Library will include a Computer/Study Skills Center and a Career Center. The School Board heard an initial presentation on the proposed project in February 2002, which was well received. The Fairfield City Council approved the agreement on May 21, 2002. The Fairfield-Suisun Unified School District Board approved the agreement on May 23, 2002. The Solano County Board of Supervisors approved the agreement on May 28, 2002 .

The Joint Use Agreement is a living document and will be reviewed on a regular basis to look for other areas of cooperation. Since the establishment of this one, Solano County Library and City of Fairfield staff have been examining the significant proportion of Hispanic students at Green Valley Middle School and Suisun Valley Elementary School and the lower test scores for those schools. The County Library is a recipient of the English Language and Literacy Intensive funds from the State and has used those funds to successfully work with students and their families to increase student test scores in five low-performing schools in Vallejo and one low-performing school in Fairfield where English as a Second language is the norm. Library staff thinks this model would work well for these two schools and will pursue this additional area of focus with the District to identify funding for this potential project.

